



Collaborative Efforts with Local Health Departments

Montana EPHT

background

Local support is critical to the development of a sustainable EPHT program. MT EPHT is working with county and tribal health departments to increase their capacity to both assess and address environmental health concerns. Through these partnerships, EPHT has developed a network of support at the local level.

The initial 11 community environmental health assessment sites included 50.6% of Montana's total population, and 51.5% of the state's American Indian population.

objectives

- To obtain input from local communities through County and Tribal Health Departments to determine local perceptions about priority environmental health (EH) concerns.
- To build county/tribal level support and understanding of the need to integrate public health and environmental data
- To provide training and technical assistance to increase local capacity for conducting environmental health assessments.

discussion

Involving Tribal and County Public Health Partners with Montana's EPHT Project was beneficial because the community assessments:

- Provided community input to the Montana EPHT Project.
- Increased county/tribal support and understanding of the need to integrate public health and environmental data.
- Increased community awareness about EH issues.
- Allowed Tribal and County Health Departments to be proactive. Involved/engaged a new group of citizens.
- Developed assessment skills and built capacity at the local level.
- Increased local capacity to assess and address community EH concerns.
- Reinforced the 10 Essential Services of Environmental Health.

results

Categories of environmental health issues of concern: Water Quality - Safety of Drinking Water Supplies; Illegal Drug Manufacturing & Drug and Alcohol Abuse; Air Quality; Trash and Litter; Insects, Pests and Associated Diseases; and Hazardous Substances and Waste



methods

Nine counties and two tribal health departments conducted environmental health assessments in their communities in 2003-2004.

Assessments involved examining data on local environmental health concerns and conducting surveys to assess perceptions of concerns among community members.

The EPHT project provided training and technical assistance to local health departments to enable them to work with community members, assess available data, and conduct surveys.

next steps & recommendations

Results were compiled and shared with stakeholders and considered during the 2005 MT EPHT Strategic Planning Session.

In 2005, three additional local jurisdictions are conducting assessments, and four special projects were funded to follow up on identified priorities of the 2004 sites.

Conducting EH assessments is a valuable process to build local capacity and raise awareness.

Assessments should utilize available models but allow flexibility depending on the size, needs and resources of local health departments.

For more information:

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